OPINION 1976

Solenopsis invicta Buren, 1972 (Insecta, Hymenoptera): specific name conserved

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Hymenoptera; FORMICIDAE; fire ants; *Solenopsis invicta*; *Solenopsis wagneri*.

Ruling

(1) Under the plenary power the specific name *wagneri* Santschi, 1916, as published in the trinomen *Solenopsis saevissima wagneri*, is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy.

(2) The name *invicta* Buren, 1972, as published in the binomen *Solenopsis invicta*, is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

(3) The name *wagneri* Santschi, 1916, as published in the trinomen *Solenopsis saevissima wagneri* and as suppressed in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology.

History of Case 3069

An application for the conservation of the specific name of *Solenopsis invicta* Buren, 1972 by the suppression of the senior subjective synonym *Solenopsis saevissima wagneri* Santschi, 1916 was received from Dr Steven O. Shattuck (*CSIRO, Canberra, Australia*), Dr Sanford D. Porter and Dr Daniel P. Wojcik (*USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.*) on 15 September 1997. After correspondence the case was published in BZN **56**: 27–30 (March 1999). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

Comments in support of the application from Prof Walter R. Tschinkel (*Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, U.S.A.*), Prof Edward O. Wilson (*Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*) and Dr S.B. Vinson (*Entomology Research Laboratory, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A & M University, Texas, U.S.A.*) were published in BZN **56**: 198–199 (September 1999).

An opposing comment by Dr Stephen W. Taber (*St Edward's University, Austin, Texas, U.S.A.*) was published in BZN **56**: 199 (September 1999). A reply by Dr Sanford D. Porter on behalf of all three authors of the application was published in BZN **57**: 48–49 (March 2000).

A list of the names and addresses of the 76 supporters of the application at the 1998 Annual Fire Ant Research Conference at Hot Springs, Arkansas is held by the Commission Secretariat (para. 5).

Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 2000 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN **56**: 28–29. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 2001 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes — 20: Alonso-Zarazaga, Bock, Bouchet, Brothers, Calder, Eschmeyer, Kerzhner, Kraus, Lamas, Macpherson, Mahnert, Minelli, Ng, Nielsen, Papp, Patterson, Rosenberg, Ride, Song, Štys

Negative votes — 2: Cogger and Martins de Souza.

No votes were received from Dupuis and Mawatari.

Voting for, Alonso-Zarazaga commented: 'Although I am voting for the conservation of the specific name of *Solenopsis invicta* so that its usage can be maintained, I regret that priority is being overturned for a recently published name because its author (Buren, 1972) omitted to make a thorough check of the available names when describing the taxon'. Bouchet commented: 'Although Buren's name is invalid, and *Solenopsis wagneri* Santschi, 1916 is the correct name for the fire ant in question, I am overwhelmed by the 1,800 scientific publications which have used the name *S. invicta* since 1972 (para. 3 of the application). Usage should be maintained'. Ng commented: 'I am convinced that the adoption of priority in this case would be a disservice. From the comments by other scientists, particularly Dr E.O. Wilson, I feel sure that the application is supported by the majority of practising ant specialists'. Voting against, Cogger commented: 'Although I agree with the objective of the application (maintenance of the accepted name *Solenopsis invicta*), it is clear from the history of the taxa involved that the taxonomy of the group is far from stable and that the subjective synonymy is likely to change in future. There is no justification for suppressing *S. wagneri* and, instead, the objective would have been better achieved by giving precedence to *S. invicta* over *S. wagneri* whenever an author treated them as conspecific'.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on an Official List and an Official Index by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

invicta, *Solenopsis*, Buren, 1972, *Journal of the Georgia Entomological Society*, **7**: 9.
wagneri, *Solenopsis saevissima*, Santschi, 1916, *Physis* (Buenos Aires), **2**: 380.